

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 10462 151626Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----098861 151630Z /44

O 151550Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4914
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 10462

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UN, MARR, LE, IS, PBOR, PINT

REF: JERUSALEM 2247

1. DRAWING ON PARA THREE IN REFTEL AND ON OTHER SIMILAR COMMENTS BY UN AND LEBANESE OFFICIALS, I CALLED WEIZMAN MORNING OF AUGUST 15 TO GIVE HIM FLAVOR OF UN AND LEBANESE CONCERNS THAT IDF WAS NOT FAITHFULLY CARRYING OUT INSTRUCTIONS OF ISRAEL'S POLITICAL AUTHORITIES. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD BEEN ASSURING MY COLLEAGUES THAT THE IDF IS A DISCIPLINED ORGANIZATION AND RIGOROUSLY SUBJECT TO CIVILIAN CONTROL. WEIZMAN RESPONDED, "IT CERTAINLY IS. YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT."

2. I THEN REFERRED TO BEN-GAL'S SCHEDULED MEETING TODAY (AUGUST 15) WITH ERSKINE. I SAID MAJOR LEBANESE CONCERN WAS NOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE LAF FORCE WHEN IT GOT TO TIBNIN. GOL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 10462 151626Z

FEARED THAT SHIDDIAC WOULD SHELL LAF UNIT AFTER IT ARRIVED NEAR HIS ENCLAVE. THEREFORE, LEBANESE WERE HOPING FOR FURTHER ASSURANCES FROM ISRAEL THAT LAF BATTALION WOULD NOT BE FIRED UPON AFTER REACHING TIBNIN.

3. I CONTINUED THAT IF WEIZMAN WERE ABLE TO ASSURE ERSKINE TODAY THAT THE IDF WOULD KEEP SHIDDIAC UNDER CONTROL ONCE THE BATTALION

HAD ARRIVED IN TIBNIN, THIS WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL. WEIZMAN SAID HE WOULD HAVE A "GOOD TALK" WITH BEN-GAL AND BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH ME.

4. ENCOURAGINGLY, IN COURSE OF THIS CONVERSATION WEIZMAN ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR UNIFIL RENEWAL. SHOWING BOTH ANXIETY AND INTEREST, HE WANTED TO KNOW THE LATEST SITUATION IN NEW YORK. I TOLD HIM NOTHING MUCH HAD CHANGED SINCE OUR LAST CONVERSATION. UN ACTION WAS STILL A PROBLEM AND WOULD BECOME A MAJOR ONE IF THE LAF WAS UNABLE TO SYMBOLICALLY REASSERT LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY IN THE SOUTH. IN THAT EVENT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THE FRENCH AND OTHERS WOULD BEGIN TO QUESTION THEIR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION AS TROOP CONTRIBUTORS, AND ENTIRE UNIFIL OPERATION COULD UNRAVEL. IT WAS FOR THIS VERY REASON THAT WE HAD BEEN PUSHING SO HARD TO GET THE LAF UNIT TO THE SOUTH.

5. TEHILA TELEPHONED ME IN THE LATE AFTERNOON TODAY AT WEIZMAN'S REQUEST TO REPORT ON WHAT HAD OCCURRED AT THE ERSKINE/BEN-GAL MEETING TODAY. TEHILA SAID THAT ERSKINE WAS NOW SUGGESTING MOVEMENT OF THE UNIT BY HELICOPTER NORTH FROM KAWKABA, WEST ALONG A LINE NORTH OF THE LITANI ALMOST TO THE MEDITERRANEAN, THEN BACK SOUTHEAST TO TWO POINTS WHICH HE IDENTIFIED AS BEING CONSIDERABLY FURTHER NORTH THAN TIBNIN. APPARENTLY IT APPEARED TO BEN-GAL THAT THESE SUGGESTIONS FROM ERSKINE HAD ALREADY BEEN COORDINATED WITH THE LEBANESE AND MAY HAVE HAD THEIR AGREEMENT. THERE WAS ALSO SOME DISCUSSION OF A LAND ROUTE, PRESUMABLY OVER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 10462 151626Z

THE BRIDGE, BUT THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION SEEMED TO BE ON THIS HELICOPTER ROUTE.

6. BEN-GAL REPORTEDLY TOLD ERSKINE THAT IF THE UNIT WERE DEPLOYED IN TIBNIN THERE WAS AN 80 PERCENT RISK THAT IT WOULD COME UNDER SHELL FIRE FROM THE MILITIAS. IN THE POINTS FURTHER NORTH THE RISK WOULD DROP TO 20 TO 25 PERCENT. BEN-GAL TOLD ERSKINE THAT THE ISRAELIS AGREED WITH THE DECISION TO DEPLOY, IF IT WERE TAKEN, AND THAT THEY WOULD DO THEIR VERY BEST TO CONTROL THE MILITIAS AND PRECLUDE SHELLING. (BUT THIS CAN HARDLY BE TERRIBLY REASSURING GIVEN THE RISK PERCENTAGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.)

7. THE NEXT STEPS SEEMS TO BE THAT ERSKINE WAS RETURNING TO BEIRUT TO GET "FINAL AGREEMENT" TO ONE OF THE TWO ALTERNATIVES.

8. COMMENT: I HAVE JUST SEEN DICK PARKER'S MESSAGE, BEIRUT 4708, ENTITLED "SOME UNSPEAKABLE THOUGHTS ABOUT 425." MUST SAY THAT IT MAKES A GREAT DEAL OF SENSE TO ME. THINGS DO REMAIN IN A MESS. BUT THE CRISIS AS SUCH IS MORE LIKELY TO EXPLODE IN BEIRUT AGAIN RATHER THAN IN THE SOUTH. AND I HAVE NEVER TAKEN NEARLY AS SERIOUSLY AS MY EX-COLLEAGUES IN IO THE PREDICTION THAT THE UN WOULD WALK AWAY FROM UNIFIL AND FROM ITS RATHER SUCCESSFUL

OPERATION IN THE SOUTH UNLESS A LEBANESE FLAG SPROUTED IN TIBNIN.
LEWIS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV10462
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780333-0967
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780861/aaaabzfe.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9508f762-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 JERUSALEM 2247
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1732635
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTHERN LEBANON
TAGS: MARR, PBOR, PINT, LE, IS, UN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9508f762-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014